

## Danner, Ward

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**From:** Maier, Brent  
**Sent:** Monday, May 05, 2014 9:19 AM  
**To:** Mogharabi, Nahal; Armann, Steve; Huetteman, Tom; Wilson, Patrick; Nurre, Deirdre; Scott, Jeff  
**Cc:** Keener, Bill; Zito, Kelly; John, Steven  
**Subject:** (Malibu) PEER Press Release: Malibu Teachers Reject Schools' PCB Cleanup Plan

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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**Categories:** Green Category

Please see attached PEER press release.

*Brent Maier*

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**From:** info=peer.org@mail.salsalabs.net [mailto:info=peer.org@mail.salsalabs.net] **On Behalf Of** Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER)  
**Sent:** Monday, May 05, 2014 9:04 AM  
**To:** Maier, Brent  
**Subject:** PRESS RELEASE: Malibu Teachers Reject Schools' PCB Cleanup Plan

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For Immediate Release: Monday, May 5, 2014  
Contact: Kirsten Stade (202) 265-7337

### **MALIBU TEACHERS REJECT SCHOOLS' PCB CLEANUP PLAN Illegal Levels of PCBs to Remain in Classrooms; No Soil Testing on Campuses**

Washington, DC — Teachers working in contaminated Malibu public schools are strongly protesting the district's initial cleanup plan as both illegal and unsafe, according to a letter filed today by Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) on behalf of 29 staff from the Malibu Middle and High Schools and Juan Cabrillo Elementary School. The campuses have been roiled since this fall, when several seriously ill teachers raised concerns and it was revealed that high levels of an array of toxic contaminants had been found on campus but teachers, students and parents were never notified.

The new controversy concerns the proposed plan by the latest remediation consultant hired by the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District. The plan by Environ International would only address one aspect of contamination on the campuses and is entitled "Comprehensive PCB-Related

Building Materials Inspection, Management and Removal.” Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) are highly toxic persistent pollutants banned in the U.S. since 1979. Once widely used in appliances and construction, they are classified as probable human carcinogens and linked to damage to the immune, reproductive, nervous, and endocrine systems. The federal Toxic Substances Control Act requires PCBs to be removed from schools when found in concentrations of 50 parts per million (ppm) or higher.

The Environ plan, however, calls for leaving PCBs in classrooms and other school buildings even above the 50 ppm federal limit until the rooms are either demolished or renovated at some uncertain time in the future. In the meantime, the plan calls for “Best Management Practices” which are indistinguishable from ordinary cleaning. In addition and in spite of its touted “comprehensive” nature, the Environ plan would –

- Not test soil on the campuses, despite significant quantities of PCBs of unknown origin uncovered in the limited area of campus soil previously tested prior to planned construction;
- Not test materials identified as potentially containing PCBs to determine if they actually contain PCBs and in what concentrations;
- Totally ignore potential PCB-containing materials at Juan Cabrillo Elementary School; and
- Even where PCBs were exposed to the air due to broken or deteriorating caulk, not necessarily remove the PCBs. Instead, Environ proposes to “manage in place” by making undefined “repairs” or encapsulations.

“It is simply unacceptable that the teachers and students of these schools will remain continuously exposed to PCB-containing materials,” stated PEER Senior Counsel Paula Dinerstein who sent the letter on behalf of teachers urging that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reject the Environ plan. “This consultant has it backwards, using ‘Best Management Practices’ which are only supposed to be an interim step until the contaminated material is removed – not the long-term solution.”

The concerns raised by teachers are echoed by parents and residents. On May 7th, the district board has scheduled a “listening session” to air concerns.

The effort surrounding PCBs in school buildings is only the first part of the district’s promised action to address toxic contamination on the campuses. Back in 2010, more than 1,000 tons of soil containing chlordane and DDT at “unacceptable” health levels as well as other toxic chemicals (lead, arsenic, cadmium, benzene and toluene) had been removed from one small area of the campus. The next installment of the plan concerning soil testing and remediation is set to be unveiled in late June when it will be harder for teachers and parents to review.

“The larger plan should be available this month, not when school is out of session,” Dinerstein added, noting that the district has rebuffed the opportunity for experts retained by Malibu Unites to peer review the plans and their execution. “The district has been going through the motions of community involvement while managing to turn a deaf ear to repeated clear demands for comprehensive testing and complete toxic remediation of these schools.”

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[Read the PEER letter](#)

[View the Environ PCB plan](#)

[See letter the Malibu Community Alliance comments](#)

[Look at teachers' refusal to return to contaminated classrooms](#)

[Examine latest developments on the campuses](#)

